

1489 / 36

READING RACES;

OR, THE

BERKSHIRE BEAUTIES.

P O E M.

— *Junctaque Nymphis Gratia decentes*

Alternò Terram quatiant Pede.

HOK.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY CARMAN AND SMART IN READING;

WILLIS, NEWBURY; BLAKENEY, WINDSOR; RUSSELL, GUILDFORD;

COOK, FARNHAM; WELLS, MARLBOROUGH;

AND JACKSON AT OXFORD.

M DCC LXXVII

READING PRESS

OF 1852

BERKSHIRE BEAUTIES



PRINTED BY J. H. BROWN, NEW YORK, AND S. H. BROWN, NEW YORK.

NEW YORK, 1852.

COOK, LAMBERT, WHITE, BROWN, & CO.

AND S. H. BROWN AT NEW YORK.

NEW YORK.

DEDICATION

DETUR PULCHRIORI—

TO THE FAIREST.

MADAM,

AS it is unusual to present a Work to the Public Eye without a Dedication, I have taken the Liberty of addressing the following Poem to you. It would be taking too much upon me, openly, and without an express Permission to prefix your Name to so trifling a Composition; therefore, "Let Conscious Beauty speak." And I sincerely hope, that every one of my Fair Readers may honour me so far, as to think herself the Person here meant; as I am sure each has a just Claim to a more exalted Preference than it is in the Power of this humble Poem to give her. You will find, Madam, the following Lines, the hasty Production of a juvenile Pen, artless, unrevised; eager to give Beauty and Merit all their due Praises, but wanting in Fancy and Ability to perform it. He therefore humbly relies on the Mildness of your Nature to

look with an Eye of Favour on him—a Liberty he would not presume to solicit, if there were a single Line inserted, that could offend that native Sensibility and Virtue, which so sweetly add to every external Grace. He means to offend no one—And if any, not here mentioned, should think themselves slighted—I beg Leave to observe that neither Time nor Memory would permit me to enumerate their numberless Perfections: The Power, not the Intention is to blame.—To you, then, Fair Lady, I submit my Fate, and if, under your Sanction, I have the Honour of gaining the slightest Applause from the softer Sex—I shall view with an Eye of total Indifference the sharp Remarks of the other.

I am, Madam,

With great Respect,

Your unknown Friend,

Admirer,

And Humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

READING RACES:

OR, THE BERKSHIRE BEAUTIES.

YE tuneful Muses, here attend,
In grateful harmony descend;
Kindly correct each fault-ring line,
And let my verse with Beauty shine;
Let flutt'ring Graces crown the lay,
And roscate loves their sweets display;
And, O, ye Fair, propitious view,
This humble tribute paid to you;
Weak must be all the pow'r of verse,
Your matchless Beauties to rehearse.

Once

Th

'Tis not a common strain I ask;
 Bold the attempt, and hard the task.
 —To give each picture every charm,
 And make it, like the person, warm,
 Is more alas! than I can do,
 And would Sir Jehu's self outdo;
 Yet, will I raise my feeble lay,
 When Beauty calls I must obey.
 Tho' stern Apollo's frown I dread,
 Unus'd poetic soil to tread;
 Yet, gentle Venus I implore,
 My unstrung lyre to restore;
 And sweetly thro' my verse declare,
 The Graces of her fav'rite Fair;
 Thus shall I hope one smile to gain,
 Specific balm for every pain.
 —A real truth I lay before you,
 Tho' slightly cloath'd in allegory,
 Observe each Fair, each Beauty scan,
 Then call this Fæctum, if you can.
 Once

ONCE on a day, (it needs not when,
 As Gods converse as well as men)
 Hermes, the merry God, was sat,
 With mighty Jove, in close debate,
 (Their subject needed good digestion,
 For marriage was the thing in question,
 A holy rite, ordain'd above,
 The sacred tie of lawful love;
 But, mighty Jove, it seems, was tir'd,
 —And dear variety desired.
 Frown not, ye fair, or think it odd;
 Consider,—Jove, is but a Heathen God,
 And he, that strays from one of you,
 I'm sure must be a *Heathen* too.)
 —“Hermes, the am'rous shuad'rer pry'd,
 “I wish to chuse an earthly bride;
 “Juno must still the scepter hold,
 “As queen of heaven gave and scold;
 “But tho' immortal—she's my wife,
 “—And wedlock, is a *thing for life*;
 “No

" No struggles now our fates can sever,
 " So we are doom'd to *live* for ever.
 " And what are all the joys of heaven,
 " To those, by blooming mortals given
 " Leda, Europa, Danae prove,
 " The mighty bliss of stolen love.
 " Again, the scepter I'll resign,
 " To make some earthly charmer mine.
 " Then, *Hermes*, hear my fix'd decree—
 " —Companion of my ramble be—
 " This *Night*, I call a congregation,
 " At *READING* hold my visitation;
 " There view the *Beauties* one and all,
 " Assembled at a *splendid Ball*;
 " Where all the choicest fair resort,
 " And Beauty holds her *fav'rite court*.
 " Whoe'er I chuse—you fix upon her,
 " And let her know the mighty honour;
 " Burst forth at once, from all disguise,
 " To tell the mandate of the skies;
 " — That

" — That Jove had from terrestrial taken, A
 " His Godhead, and his bolts forsaken ;— A
 " And lur'd, by more than mortal charms, A
 " Now seeks a heaven—in her arms ; A
 " I swear by all the pow'rs above, A
 " Not fate itself, so fix'd as Jove.— A
 " Perhaps, one female I may spare, A
 " Just, to reward you, for your care.— A
 (You cannot think the bargain hard, A
 Or think, that Hermes poorly far'd ; A
 Was not great Jove the God of thunder ? A
 Where then is all the mighty wonder ? A
 Did ever mortal chaplain dare, A
 With knife profane, to touch the fare ? A
 No—let him mutter grace—and wait,— A
 Till first my lord has fill'd his plate.—) A
 —Hermes content, the scheme approv'd, A
 For mischief was the thing he lov'd. A
 So, quick as thought, a-down they flew ; A
 En militaire, appear'd in view.— A

B

A God

A God can any person take,
 A clown—a Beau—a *Captain* make;
 In scarlet bold, they charm the fight,
 With gay cockade—and gorget bright;
 Which, often more destructive prove,
 Than all th' artillery of love.
 Each practis'd o'er his study'd part,
 Got oaths, and blasphemies by heart.
 For Jove had, by experience, prov'd,
 A soldier,—was a thing they lov'd.
 A *Scarlet* coat will strike the fight,
 When naked merit's banish'd quite;
 And let us do the best we can,—
 The Captain, is the *charming man*.—
 Excuse, ye fair, this bold digression;
 'Tis envy prompts me to confession;
 For, *Proteus* like, I'd change my shape,
 To every creature—but an ape;
 And that, I think, would never do,
 —The wretched rival of beau;

But

[11]

But, every *manly* form, I'd prove,
To be the very thing you love.—

—Great Jove, now breathing sweet perfume,
And powder'd Hermes, seek the room.

Thus have I seen a courtier stand,

With cringing bow—and cap in hand;

With feign'd applause, forestall a joke,

And grin—because his patron—spoke:—

So, Hermes caught each single word,

And, bowing, enter'd with his lord;

Where, Belles in pleasing tumult throng,

And beauty, beauty drove along.—

Jove, struck at once, cry'd out, "I yield!

" O Hermes, view fair ENGLEFIELD;

" Those eyes relucant charm my sight,

" Soft beaming with celestial light;

" Each feature glows with rays of sense,

" Mild virtue—and beneficence.—

" Great Juno must the palm resign,

" For ENGLEFIELD, shall now be mine.—

" The ready God obsequious stood,
 " With eager eye, the beauty view'd;
 Displays his hand—the Brussels lace,
 The diamond, glitter'd in her face;
 Whilst she, unmov'd, the beau survey'd,
 Benignly smil'd—but nothing said—
 But, as he strove to tell the case,
 The monarch held him to the place.
 For lo! close pressing thro' the throng,
 The beauteous HODGES tower'd along,
 With look majestic, struck the God—
 —And Hermes trembled, as she trod,
 Her graceful form—enchanting look,
 The virtues of her heart bespoke;
 Whilst breathing beauty—artless grace,
 In snowy dimple, take their place.
 Her next, the God, with heart and voice,
 Declar'd to Hermes, as his choice;
 Again, the God advanc'd to tell,
 Again, the same mischance befel.

(Immortals

(Immortals seldom speak aloud,
 Jove only look'd—and Hermes bow'd)
 For now, O'BRIAN, gentle maid,
 In nature's choicest robes array'd,
 With placid ease approach'd the crowd;
 ---Th' admiring Gods in wonder bow'd;
 Whilst ev'ry mortal breast was fir'd,
 And each the smiling nymph admir'd.
 Her cheeks, by nature's pencil spread,
 The lilly white—the rosy red;
 Her eyes with artless force controul,
 And speak a dignity of soul;
 Jove here declar'd---'twas past a joke;
 When, scarce the very words were spoke;
 But, quick he spy'd two beauteous faces,
 ---And took 'em for the Sister Graces;
 Venus, he thought, her leave had given,
 But, kept one sister still in heaven.
 Lo! as he view'd—an awful shade
 Encompass'd round each lovely maid.

He

He saw Minerva, close attendant,
 Against her father turn defendant.
 The stately Ægis grac'd her hand,
 Aloft she held a magic wand,
 Unseen by ev'ry mortal eye;
 In vain could Jove its pow'r defy;
 The thund'rer gave Minerva birth,
 With pow'r despotic *upon earth*.
 She led her blooming charge along,
 Amidst the gay admiring throng;
 And, lest the glaring garb he wore,
 Should make great Jove a conqueror,
 Whene'er the maids the God espy'd,
 She held the Ægis on that side;
 Well knowing, in their situation,
 Without her aid, the strong temptation.
 The God now felt a *double flame*,
 And *BLA GRAVE* was his fav'rite name.
 Now, as he each alternate views,
 Poor Jove was puzzled which to chuse,
 And

And vex'd to see Minerva there,
 Assume of each peculiar care.
 —With graceful ease—becoming height
 The sprightly BERRY charm'd his sight;
 That nameless something undefin'd,
 With innocence and virtue join'd,
 Improv'd each soft, attractive grace,
 And fix'd the Godhead to the place.
 When, next he view'd her Sister fair,
 —Sweet JENNY was the heav'nly care.
 Her blushing beauties—stately mien,
 Majestic port—and brow serene,
 Her tow'ring stature, struck from far,
 And beam'd above each other fair.
 Thus may be seen, in gaudy row,
 A bed of blooming tulips grow;
 Each plant with varying colours bright,
 Will singly charm the gazer's sight;
 But That which runs with stalk on high,
 Must soonest catch the roving eye;

The

The smaller plants at once are lost, or busy he
 And this, awhile is all his boast.
 —Whilst he demur'd between the two;
 The smiling HOARE—appear'd in view;
 Sprightly, alive, with native ease,
 That Gods and men alike can please.
 Her hair, that flutters with a grace,
 In wanton ringlets, o'er her face.
 Her coral lips, that breathe perfume,
 Her cheeks, with Hebe's texture bloom;
 Her eyes, quick flashing, wound at will,
 And, like white powder—silent kill.
 The toute ensamble charm'd his sight,
 And, as he thought, o'ercame him quite.
 But, turning round, he chanc'd to spy
 The blooming CHURCHILL, standing by.
 A roseate blush o'erspread her cheek,
 The whitest lilly grac'd her neck;
 A speaking coyness in her eye,
 Full beam'd with sensibility,

At

At once invites a lover's praise,
 But timid, shuns the flightest gaze.
 Thus may the modest plant be seen,
 With open foliage, grace the green;
 But if you touch—the charms decay,
 The shrinking beauty dies away.
 Jove now declar'd with brow serene,
 That, "CHURCHILL was the rival queen;"
 With fond impatience, long'd to sip
 The nectar, on her fragrant lip.—
 Unthinking God—how prone to range!
 For ev'ry face can make a change.
 Now once again, behold him smit,
 And bending at the shrine of PIT.
 Calmly serene, her beauties shine,
 Whilst ease and dignity combine
 To add to each commanding grace,
 And speak her of a beauteous race.
 Thus, is the chaste Diana seen,
 Amidst her nymphs, that trip the green.—

Her easy shape and tow'ring size,
 Bespeak the Goddess in disguise.—
 But, as he chanc'd to look again,
 Attractive PHELP—how fit to reign!
 Again, bore off th' immortal prize—
 And struck the Monarch of the skies.—
 Hermes beheld her shape and air,
 And wish'd the Thund'rer was not there.
 He rapp'd his box—pick'd up her fan,
 Like any other—gentleman.—
 But Jove beheld her as she sat,
 And whisper'd Hermes, "he must wait,"—
 Who, now abash'd, resign'd the day,
 —Behind the monarch, sunk away.—
 He thought his errand, now was done,
 And PHELP, the prize, he fix'd upon.
 Not half so fierce were Juno's charms,
 When first her beauties grac'd his arms;
 Or, when on sacred Ida laid,
 The stolen Cestus, she display'd.—

When,

When lo! a lovely troop appear!
 Bear on—and charge him in the rear.
 Jove thought so many must undo him,
 And wish'd for thunder to subdue 'em;
 But found alas! no light'ning nigh,
 Besides what flash'd from every eye;
 And he tho' God—was doom'd the same,
 To languish in a brighter flame.
 Gay FLOYER now the next came on,
 Unknowing what her eyes had done;
 Her dimpled cheeks with blushes glow,
 Where lillies languish, roses grow;
 A melting softness speaks her soul,
 Virtue and beauty grac'd the whole.
 The pow'r of verse alas! how faint,
 The sweet MARIA'S charms to paint!
 Her lips, her neck—her panting breast,
 By nature swelling to be prest.—
 Her eyes emit a brighter ray—
 Than all the glories of the day;

A genial warmth to each impart,
 Confuse the mind—and fire the heart.—
 A younger sister now appears,
 In all the bloom of youthful years.
 Thus, when we view the damask rose
 It's fragrant beauties wide disclose;
 The smaller buds at first are seen,
 Just peeping thro' the leafy green.—
 But by degrees luxuriant grow—
 And soon, in rival lustre, blow.—
 Next them, Fair SMITH her power tries,
 And struck the ruler of the skies;
 Virtue, good humour, softness move,
 And melt her gentle heart to love.—
 Jove found his power now was vain,
 And wish'd himself in heav'n again.
 How could he chuse, at such a ball,
 Without he took them one and all!
 For, as he each with transport view'd,
 The graceful RUCK before them stood;

Her

Her easy shape—her modest air,
 Her downcast eyes—her beauteous hair,
 Her chaste demeanour—pleasing form,
 That takes from innocence a charm;
 From envy's self due praises drew,
 And kept the am'rous God in awe;
 Who, quite abash'd could nothing say,
 But, struck by virtue, sneak'd away.—
 Once more the Muse shall raise it's wing,
 In praise of FOSTER—dare to sing;
 Tho' sweet the theme—the bard must fail,
 The God of verse could not prevail,
 Without some fav'ring power aid,
 To paint the blooming, blushing maid.
 Take from the peach it's painted hue;
 Take from the rose the pearly dew;
 Take from the lilly all it's white;
 Take from the diamond all it's light;
 Cull nature's beauties one by one—
 And all, by FOSTER are out-done.

EdA

No

No wonder then—she gave a look, and
 The gay immortal soon was struck—
 —BURT—light and easy skip'd about—
 The changing dotard found her out—
 He view'd the plumes that grac'd her head,
 Her loosen'd curls, dishevell'd spread
 In airy ringlets o'er her face,
 And took from negligence a grace—
 The God now felt a fresh alarm,
 For lo! THREE SISTERS arm in arm—
 PALMER—like Juno, stately trod,
 And, for a while, deceiv'd the God—
 The next for Pallas too he took,
 The third for Venus, by her look.
 Poor Jove foreboded future strife;
 Yet sure, he thought, if 'twas his wife—
 He never in his life before
 Such striking beauty could explore.
 For here he saw each smiling face,
 Soft beam'd with every virtuous grace.

And

And well he knew—e'en spouse and all,
 In that particular, must fall.
 But turning quick, he saw a maid,
 In native innocence array'd;
 Fairer than fancy's self can paint,
 How weak are words—and verse how faint!
 To bring those striking charms to view,
 Or sound the praise to LOVEDAY due.
 Her speaking eyes at once declare
 Wit and good humour seated there,
 Thro' radiant beams her thoughts are read,
 There love begins—and there is fed.
 Virtue and beauty charm the soul,
 And sep'rate reign without controul;
 But who can stand the powerful fair,
 When heav'n itself has join'd 'em there?
 Her blooming SISTER, by her side,
 Shone sweetly forth, in rival pride,
 Alike, of every heart the care,
 As Waller's Sacharissa fair.

Whilst

Whilst every virtue of the mind,
 To aid the whole, propitious join'd.
 For short is beauty's reign alone,
 If conduct fails the tott'ring throne;
 But, like the rose, it's sweets decay,
 The short-liv'd wonder of a day :
 Arm it with sense—it points the dart,
 Impels, and drives it to the heart.
 Poor Jove was taken, he averr'd,
 But, like his brothers of the sword,
 Another still another drives.
 The God had had a hundred wives,
 If every form had fix'd unmov'd,
 For every one he saw, he lov'd;
 He then had giv'n a nation birth,
 And near new-peopled half the earth.—
 —But say, my Muse, what charms belong
 To beauteous, tempting, blushing LONG;
 Their force the Deity assail'd,
 And, with a look, at once prevail'd.

“ See,

" See, Hermes, see, the monarch³ said, b'ams and T
 " The native beauties of that maid⁴ and H
 " At her approach all colours fail, were it w
 " The lilly reddens—rose turns pale; Of every blood
 " The ruby to her lips must yield,—dely thus H
 " And art to nature give the field; Regardle of
 " Her soul, as spotless as the dove, And all deliv
 " And in her gentle bosom, love, H. Hebon, 208
 —More he had said, but passing by, U
 The timid B A G N A L caught his eye, Those matchle
 For science fam'd—and force of wit, Without a M
 Her darts unerring always hit; is gazed on the
 She mildly courts the cooler glade, Nor envy's
 Shrinks from the glare—and courts the shade, T
 Her person, like her manner, charm, —love view'd
 And e'en the frozen bosom warms, Nor knew he
 Hermes advanc'd to seize the prize, For now the
 When smiling G I L L, with melting eyes, Rous
 Let fly a glance, with so much skill, The beaucous
 (A mortal it at once must kill) To waton in the

Here

D

That

That turn'd the former dart aside, " See, Hermes,
 And Hermes soon the change espy'd; " The native
 Endless it were the power to tell " At her approach
 Of every blooming, beauteous belle; " The lily
 How HARDY—NOW—NOW—PAXTON STONE, " The
 Regardless of their laurels won; " And art to name
 And all deserving praises due; " Her soul, as spoked
 Soft, modest HILARY—HILARY—HILARY " And in her
 Useless will be the power of verse; " More he had
 These matchless graces to rehearse " The mind
 Without a Muse, each single name; " For science
 Is grafted on the trunk of fame; " Her darts
 Nor envy's self dare blast the throne; " She mildly
 That late and beauty dignify'd " Shrinks
 —Jove view'd whole crowds, and rushing on; " Her
 Nor knew he which to fix upon; " And e'en
 For now the harp and tuneful lyre " Hermes
 Rouse every passion to desire; " When smiling
 The beauteous circle all advance; " Let fly
 To wanton in the mazy dance. " (A mortal
 That D Here

Here auburn tresses grace a neck,
 In waving curls the fair bedeck;
 Whilst busy zephyrs wanton breathe,
 In tepid gales disclose beneath;
 And thro' the sun'ring ringlets show
 The fair expanse of Alpine snow.
 Here let the Muse discharge a debt,
 Nor one *distinguish'd* fair forget.
 And more than common praise is due,
 Becoming S A Y E R, sure to you,
 Thy gliding form each bosom moves,
 Like Venus in her Cyprian groves.
 A Juno's soul—a grace—an air—
 As Dian chaste—as Hebe fair.
 Still, as he view'd each charming face,
 Another darted in her place.
 With sportive foot they shake the ground,
 Responsive to the tuneful sound.
 Here now a taper leg is seen,
 Nor can the robe her beauties screen;

And each by trying to conceal, still more
 Does artfully her charms reveal
 —From fair to fair the God remov'd;
 The more he saw, the more he lov'd.
 He view'd the slender waist, the fair
 Around the yielding, slender waist,
 The harmony of shape and line,
 And squeeze the beautiful skin;
 Two glowing orbs—luxurious sight
 The pliant whalebone brings to light;
 In swelling curves, delicious view
 The sweet impression smite below
 Unveil themselves with modest pride,
 And raise the charm they wish to hide.
 Hermes, cry'd, 'twill never do,
 Ten thousand nameless charms I view;
 Still as I strive to fix on one,
 A fairer comes—and all's undone.
 In airy frisks, around they move,
 And fire the heart of melting love.

Thus,

Thus, all the night, the heav'nly pair
 Impatient gaze, from fair to fair—
 —But now the shady gloom was past,
 And jocund day-light came at last;
 Gay purple rays the skies adorn,
 And dawning blushes paint the morn;
 Aurora rear'd her blushing head,
 From gloomy Tithon's golden bed;
 Unbarr'd the rosy gates of light,
 And chas'd the vapours of the night.—
 —The Gods, perplex'd, were in a scrape,
 Nor knew, how best, they could escape;
 Unwilling still to leave the throng,
 They found they tarry'd there too long;
 For Jove look'd up and saw from far
 Bright Phœbus mount his golden car;
 And fear'd, from him it might be known
 The errand that he came upon.
 Or should he, thus equip'd, be seen,
 It must be told to Heaven's Queen.

A jea-

(A jealous wife will not knock under,
 To e'en the mighty God of thunder.)—
 So whisper'd Hermes, hence, away,
 " Behold, the busy God of day,
 " With eye triumphant, views me here,
 " A captive to these earthly fair.
 " And since I can't the cause decide,
 " To chuse the fairest for my bride.
 " For each, in rival charms, has shone,
 " And each, in turn, my heart has won;
 " Left then, on me some scandal fall,
 " Before we go, I'll bless 'em all.
 " To each, shall brighter gifts be giv'n,
 " Than any yet, on this side heav'n;
 " Wit, beauty, virtue—mildness, sense,
 " Around the room, I will dispense;
 " These shall allure and charm the eye,
 " Whilst we to heaven guiltless fly.
 " This will the rising storm alluage,
 " And cool relenting Juno's rage;

" The

" The real truth, from all conceal,
 " And yet, our majesty reveal."—
 He said—and with a tender look,
 The heav'nly odours round 'em shook,
 Sweet spicy fragrances scents the room,
 Ambrosial gales—and soft perfume;
 Aerial sprites in clouds descend,
 And round each beauty take their stand;
 The fav'ring sylphs around 'em fly,
 Good nature, wit, humanity;
 Whilst envy and her grisly crew,
 In dire dismay affrighted flew.—
 He wav'd his hand, and straight appear
 The Loves and Graces, waiting there.
 Hebe herself was there to form,
 And give each beauty pow'r to charm.
 The Loves, the Smiles, the Glances seek
 A safe asylum, in a cheek;
 And many a fly, enchanting grace,
 Within a dimple took its place.—

Cupid was seen to basking lie
 Extracting lightning from an eye;
 Or, greatly daring, strove to sip
 The nectar on a coral lip.
 Hermes, and Jove, still stay'd to view
 The progress of the heav'nly crew;
 And more and more the crowd admir'd;
 By wisdom, love, and beauty fir'd;
 With placid eye the work survey'd,
 Pleas'd with the excellence he made.
 "Be happy, all, the thunder cry'd,
 "And each some happy mortal's bride;
 "Be just, be wise—be kind, be fair;
 "The world's and Jove's peculiar care
 "These charms will fix, for ever sure,
 "When e'en the pow'r of beauty's o'er;
 "The sinking name for ever save,
 "And bid defiance to the grave;
 "So when each form in dust is laid—
 "As angels you shall live again."

He said—and in a flash of light,
 With Hermes, vanish'd from the sight;
 Unnotic'd sought his blest abode,
 Resum'd his bolts—was all the God.
 —But fix'd below, the heav'nly train
 Amidst the blooming BELLES remain;
 Nor can vain mortals ward the blow,
 Since heav'n itself has will'd it so.
 Both Gods and men now clearly prove,
 —That READING IS THE COURT OF LOVE.

F I N I S

He said—and in a flash of light
 With Homer, vanish'd from the sight;
 Unnoted sought his bliss abode,
 Return'd his bolts—was all the God.
 —But fix'd below, the heav'nly train
 Amidst the blooming Heroes remain;
 Nor can vain mortals ward the blow,
 Since heav'n's light has will'd it so.
 Both Gods and men now clearly prove
 —That Reason is the Court of Love.



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